

REMARKS / ARGUMENTS

Claims 26 and 74 have been amended to combine the first two elements into a single element. This amendment was made not for patentability but merely to make the claims more clear, with no change in scope.

The independent claims, 26 and 74, stand rejected under §102 as anticipated by Russell. Russell teaches a system where textual information encoded in printed barcodes is scanned by a barcode scanner and then input to a computer via a “programmable decoder module” and thereby entered as a string of text into a text input field controlled by a web browser application program running on the computer. The text which is input to this field is a URL which directs the web browser to a web page on a server across a network. The “programmable decoder module” is equivalent to the “keystroke output wedge” specified in the independent claims, 26 and 74.

In Russell, as shown in Figure 1B, the information is passed in only one direction: from the optical scanning device to the programmable decoder module to the data transmission circuitry and then to the computer and specifically to the web browser program as input to that program. Because the web browser program is running under control of an operating system, it is implicit that the data transmission circuitry provides the information to an input port of the operating system which then provides the information to the web browser program. In Russell, there is no disclosure of information being transmitted back from the operating system to the programmable decoder module which is specified in claims 26 and 74, thus distinguishing the claimed invention from Russell.

In particular, element (b) of claim 26 specifies that the keystroke output wedge receives information from the Windows type operating system in response to a query. Nothing like this is suggested by Russell. In addition, element (c) of claim 26 specifies that the keystroke output wedge provides to a user a natural language message. Nothing like this is suggested by Russell. In fact, Russell teaches away from this idea. In column 12 at lines 28 – 31, Russell teaches the closest prior art for this aspect of the claimed invention. Specifically, Russell teaches that the programmable decoder module


causes the optical scanning base unit to produce "an acoustical acknowledgment signal in response to each successful read". Such a signal is typically a beep. The scanning input hardware and software in the prior art can do nothing more than acknowledge that a code was successfully read because these components do not receive information from the operating system which they might use to output any other sort of communication to the user.

By contrast, in the claimed invention, the barcode decoder module ("keystroke output wedge") receives information from the operating system in response to a query and then, as a function of the content of the information received, generates a natural language message which is provided to a user. Russell teaches merely a "beep" and no natural language message and Russell does not suggest that the beep might ever be in response to information received from the operating system in response to a query.

The above analysis also applies to claim 74. The remaining claims depend from independent claims 26 and 74 and are therefore also allowable.

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